

Congresswoman Blasts Response To Yo-Yo Balls

Schakowsky Says Government Response 'Weak'

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CHICAGO -- An Illinois Congresswoman criticized the government's response to a potentially dangerous toy, calling it "still too weak."

Target 5 reporter Lisa Parker said on Friday that Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-9th) said the Consumer Product Safety Commission should be more aggressive in recalling yo-yo balls, which are squishy rubber balls that can be spun around via an equally squishy rubber string.

"I have a problem with the philosophy of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, which is essentially 'Let's wait until there's a terrible accident - let's wait until something really terrible happens,'" Schakowsky (pictured, right) said.

Parents have reported that their children have nearly choked to death after the string wrapped around their necks.

"I know it was a dangerous thing that happened to my child," said parent Kathy Henn. "I just didn't know it was happening to other children."

Parker further reported that none of toys she bought had any identifiable contact information, such as the name of manufacturer.

"They will say 'Made in Taiwan' or 'Made in China,' but give you nobody to contact," Parker said.

Lisa Lipin, a Skokie parent who has caught the ear of legislators and safety advocates around the country, obtained approximately 79 incident reports from around the country about children who have nearly died after the toy became wrapped around their necks.

Schakowsky, Parker further reported, bought some of the toys for her own grandchildren before seeing Target 5's report on them. She urged the commission to take action, but agency officials said they found "insufficient evidence to support a recall." Agency officials, while calling the incidents "uncomfortable and anxiety-producing for children," said the toys posed a "low risk of strangulation."

Schakowsky said she disagreed.

"I think this is just a disaster waiting to happen," Schakowsky said.